

Chapter 3

Nashville: Division and Reunion 1860-1900

Confederate Major William Mott was among the last of the Rebel defenders to leave Nashville. On Thursday morning, February 20, 1862, he walked alone through the littered streets and 'beheld the most desolate place I think ever existed; those beautiful ladies that I had seen) at every window had either deserted the doomed city or secreted themselves from view of passersby. Soldiers and citizens seemed to have emulated their example and scarcely a living, moving being was to be seen, not even a dog, in once busy, hustling, thriving Nashville.

What had begun the previous June as a defiant bolt from the Union by the people of Nashville and Tennessee was about to end with the surrender of the city to federal forces. On the evening of February 24, Major General Don Carlos Buell arrived in Edgefield with his Union troops. Nashville Mayor Richard B. Cheatham crossed the river in a rowboat to talk with Buell, and he returned later to assure the citizens who remained that their lives and property would be protected. The next morning, a gunboat and several transports loaded with soldiers of the Sixth Ohio Volunteer Infantry reached the wharf at the foot of Broad Street. Marching to the music of their own small band, the soldiers paraded through the streets to the State Capitol and took command of it in the name of the United States. Soon, an old and famous American flag belonging to Nashville resident William Driver, an avid Union supporter, had replaced the Confederate stars and bars atop the capitol. The last statehouse to withdraw from membership in the nation thus became the first to be captured and returned to Union hands.

Nashville had never been eager for war. If its collective mood at the beginning of the 1860s could be fairly characterized, it probably would reflect general support for the practice of slavery but not a general willingness to secede from the Union or go to war for it. Not many local citizens opposed slavery, and the few who did kept their views discreetly to themselves-but at the same time, slave owners were a minority of the white population, even in rural Davidson County, and not even all of them spoke openly of slavery as an institution worth defending with guns and sabers.

Furthermore, Nashville was too well off economically to have a compelling urge for war. Its population of 17,000 in 1860 made it the eighth largest city in the South. It was a turbulent, energetic river town and a rising railroad town, a rapidly expanding center of commerce and industry. With so much money to be made and so much power to be accrued, the very notion of an all-out fight over any issue must have seemed wasteful and distracting. Nashville was a new city, and it had the rough edges to prove it - it had conspicuous opulence cheek by jowl with abject poverty; it had dirty air and dirty water and muddy streets; it could count sixty-nine houses of prostitution in a four-block-long strip between Spring Street and the Public Square. It may have needed refinement and reform, but it did not need war.

Early in 1861, voters of the city and the state opposed calling a convention to decide the secession issue. The previous fall, Nashville's own John Bell, the Jacksonian Democrat-turned Whig, had run for President as the candidate of the Constitutional Union Party. Without opposing slavery in the South, he pleaded for preservation of the Union above all. He won the electoral votes of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia, and carried Davidson County with fifty-eight percent of the vote - but Abraham Lincoln, barred from a place on the Tennessee ballot because of his views on slavery, swept the Northern states and won the election. A few months later, after the firing on Fort Sumter, Tennessee Governor Isham G. Harris defiantly rejected Lincoln's call for troops, the state

legislature passed a declaration of independence from the United States, and the voters of Tennessee (including the Nashville electorate) ratified the resolution by a wide margin. In a complete reversal of form, Tennessee had become the eleventh and last of the Confederate States of America, having rejected the counsel of Bell and a few other moderates and conservatives who wanted the state, as a last resort, to take a position of neutrality.

In the eight months of its rebellion, Nashville moved with increasing enthusiasm toward a readiness for battle. The city became a strategic center for the manufacture and stockpiling of weapons and supplies. A local powder plant was converted to a munitions factory, women began making uniforms and flags, the Nashville Plow Works started turning plowshares into swords, and a local music publishing company came out with a stirring composition called "Flag of the South". More than a dozen units of volunteer soldiers went through training exercises in the streets; the newspapers and even the churches added their voices to the militant chorus; huge parades and demonstrations were staged. For a time, the legislature and the city council sought support for an ambitious plan to relocate the Confederate capital from Montgomery, Alabama, to Nashville. It was moved instead to Richmond, Virginia, but the Confederate high command did send General Albert Sidney Johnston to Nashville to take charge of military forces in the area, and he was welcomed by the resounding cheers of thousands of city residents.

For all their patriotic spirit, however, the leaders of Nashville and Tennessee had given little thought to the city's defense. Emboldened by their own verbal belligerence, they had lost sight of the possibility of attack, and before Johnston could redirect their energies, federal gunboats had swept past Fort Donelson downriver and steamed toward the vulnerable city on the bluff.

General Johnston's stunning announcement on February 16, 1862, that Nashville would be abandoned to the Union Army so terrified the city that total panic and chaos spread like a violent fever. A mass exodus began in wagons, carriages, trains, on horseback, and on foot. Banks and stores were emptied; newspapers ceased publication; military units scattered in disarray. Governor Harris and other state officials departed in haste on a special train to Memphis, bearing carloads of government documents.

Johnston moved his command to Murfreesboro, and in the vacuum of authority left by his departure, frenzied mobs streamed wildly through the military storehouses, plundering goods and supplies. Confederate Colonel Nathan Bedford Forrest, riding in from Fort Donelson, led a cavalry charge into the midst of looters, hoping to restore law and order and to salvage the contents of the warehouses for his troops.

In less than a week, Nashville was transformed from a wartime boom town and a Confederate arsenal to a ghost town and then a Union stronghold in the Southern interior. The retreating Confederates burned the railroad bridge across the Cumberland and cut the huge cables on the suspension bridge, but the Union soldiers were not long delayed. By the time they arrived at the wharf and marched to the capitol, General Johnston and Colonel Forrest and even Major William Mott had departed from this "most desolate place." Before the national conflict was a year old, Nashville had become a prisoner of war.

DURING THREE YEARS of occupation by the Union Army, Nashville symbolized a nation at war with itself. It quickly became a vital supply depot and military command post for federal forces. River and railroad traffic supporting the military effort soon reached unprecedented levels. Hospitals for wounded soldiers were set up at the University of Nashville and elsewhere in the city. Military units came and went constantly, and a stream of black refugees from the rural countryside poured into the city seeking shelter from the war. And in the midst of all this activity, there remained a great many resident Nashvillians - a mixture of Union and Confederate sympathizers, women and children, merchants and ministers, opportunists and innocent bystanders. Most of them tried to carry on with their normal activities; some of them succeeded, and a few actually profited from the

occupation. All of them witnessed profound changes in the appearance and character of the city.

In March 1862, President Lincoln sent Andrew Johnson to Nashville to be military governor of Tennessee. A native of East Tennessee, Johnson had been governor before, in the mid-1850s, and he had also served in both houses of the state legislature and of the Congress. He had been a member of the United States Senate when Tennessee seceded from the Union, and he had refused to join state officials in rebellion. His intimate familiarity with Tennessee, its capital, and its people made him a natural choice for the task of guiding the state back into the national fold.

To that end, Johnson offered complete amnesty to the "erring and misguided" supporters of the Confederacy and required all municipal officials, educators, journalists, and clergymen to sign an oath of allegiance to the United States. Those who refused were arrested for treason and either jailed or - in the case of several ministers - sent south beyond federal lines. The Methodist and Baptist publishing houses were taken over and converted to Union purposes, and among newspapers, only those which wholeheartedly supported the federal government were permitted to continue publication.

After General Buell moved most of his army out of Nashville to pursue the war on another front, Governor Johnson was left with a garrison of only 2,000 men and a defense structure around the city that was still as inadequate as it had been under the Confederates. Throughout the summer of 1862, Confederate cavalry leaders John Hunt Morgan and Nathan Bedford Forrest continually led raids against Union weak points around Nashville, and as fall approached, the city was virtually blockaded and in imminent danger of recapture.

Overextended both in the field and in defense of the city, Buell seemed to favor abandoning Nashville, but Johnson was firmly opposed. Instead, he turned to what manpower he had available and began systematic construction of fortifications, telling Buell he would burn down the city before he would surrender it. On Capitol Hill and on other high elevations south and west of there, forts were quickly thrown up, with black laborers conscripted to do most of the work. Throughout the city, ancient trees were felled to form barricades and to make easier the sighting of approaching troops. What had been a dense forest in James Robertson's time and a shade-graced town in Andrew Jackson's became virtually overnight an exposed and barren landscape.

A time of privation and near-panic ensued. In the long, humid days of August and September, food supplies dwindled, prices soared, saloons closed, general health was endangered, and government at all levels was inept and ineffectual. Finally, late in October, the Army of the Cumberland, a 50,000-man Union force under Major General William S. Rosecrans, marched into the city with orders to shore up its defenses, and the blockade was broken.

Nashville was thus rescued from the danger of Confederate recapture - but it was far from being liberated. In the two years that followed before another external threat to the city arose, day-to-day life in the close confines of this military stronghold grew more crowded and in some ways more dangerous than it had been when the guns of war were cocked and aimed at the city's heart. Counting foot soldiers, hospital patients, civilians, government officials, prison inmates, rural immigrants, and a motley legion of prostitutes and camp followers, the population of Nashville swelled beyond 80,000. An active underground of saboteurs and smugglers worked diligently for the cause of the Confederacy. On the other side, General Rosecrans and one of his subordinates, Colonel William Truesdail, sent spies and agents provocateurs in to the streets and taverns to break up the illicit activity. Not even soldiers in the Union Army were exempt from surveillance, and among local citizens, including some of the most prominent, arrest and imprisonment frequently took place.

Drunkness, prostitution, and crime were rampant. In 1863, military officials arrested 150 prostitutes and sent them away on a steamboat, only to have them promptly returned by city officials in Louisville and Cincinnati. . One of the many military hospitals in Nashville was reserved exclusively for patients suffering from

venereal disease. A thriving black market in food, clothing, and firearms operated freely throughout the city, and in underworld shantytowns known as Slabtown and Smokey Row, crime was an everyday fact of life. A local newspaper commented in 1864 that Nashville was "filled with thugs, highwaymen, robbers, and assassins. Murder stalks throughout the city almost every night."

Authority - such as it was - was divided in incomprehensible fashion among city, county, state, and military officials, to which could be added the secret police of Rosecrans and Truesdail. In the midst of all the confusion and turmoil and the hazards to health and life, still another perplexing concern arose as legions of former slaves sought refuge in the city.

With the rural countryside in chaos and disorder because of the war, first hundreds and then thousands of blacks began to pour into Nashville in 1863. They came in desperation, often with nothing but the clothes on their backs. As the war dragged on, they huddled under whatever shelter there was, took food and jobs wherever they could find them, and waited in forlorn hope for a better day.

It would be a long time coming. Throughout the occupation, federal officials regarded the blacks in a variety of confused and contradictory ways - as liberated people, as refugees, as contraband, as potential soldiers, as serfs. The government provided some food, clothing, and tents, a few opportunities for work, and even a little schooling for the children, but all the while they kept the former slaves confined in segregated camps. By and large, the black refugees from bondage were at the mercy of the weather, the military, and the white civilians who had first call on the limited security and sustenance to be found in the overcrowded city.

In the face of these almost overwhelming problems, Nashville struggled to maintain a semblance of normal life. A few churches managed to continue services, but some were converted into hospitals, others were stymied by conflict with military officials, and still others were torn asunder by internal disruptions. Some schools were able to stay open, but the public schools were completely shut down for two years. A good many merchants not only maintained business as usual but made bigger profits in wartime than they had in peace.

The most persistent and determined show of continuity may have been in the regular performances of the Nashville Theater. It had begun long before the war as the Adelphi in a building near the corner of present-day Fourth and Charlotte avenues; under a new name and new management, it provided the only legitimate local entertainment for war-weary soldiers and civilians alike. Generals Ulysses S. Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman went there more than once on their visits to Union headquarters in Nashville, and Governor Johnson was also an occasional patron.

During a two-week engagement at the theater in February 1864, an actor by the name of John Wilkes Booth performed the prodigious feat of starring in thirteen different plays, Booth already had a reputation as an outspoken advocate of the Southern cause, but he was highly popular with Northern audiences and received generally favorable reviews wherever he went. A critic for one of the Nashville papers wrote that he could not commend Booth because he was "too violent," but in the main the young actor was favorably received on the stage and in the city. He played to packed houses, and after a final benefit performance on February 12 - Lincoln's birthday - *the Nashville Daily Union* reviewer wrote: "His genius appears equal to anything the tragic muse has produced; and the time is not distant when he will attain his highest niche of professional fame." A little more than a year later, Booth produced his own tragic drama when he assassinated President Lincoln at Ford's Theater in Washington.

Nashville staggered under its military burden through the spring and summer of 1864. Then, with Sherman marching through Georgia toward a decisive victory in the war, Lieutenant General John B. Hood led his Confederate Army of Tennessee out of Atlanta and around Sherman's flank for a surprising and desperate dash toward Nashville. Sherman sent Major General George H. Thomas to stop Hood. Thus the only battle of the war

to be fought here finally took shape in the last December before Appomattox.

Thomas had nearly 60,000 men behind the *fortifications in Nashville*, Hood brought his force of 23,000 into the circle of hills south of the city and dug in. Both armies waited through several days of bitter cold, shivering for want of enough trees to fell for firewood. Then, on December 15, Thomas sent his troops out to attack Hood, and while Nashvillians watched from their rooftops, the Union Army used its superior numbers with devastating effect. After two days of fighting, Hood and his bruised and bloody remnant of an army retreated into Alabama and Mississippi, and the first and only Battle of Nashville was over.

Soon after that, when the Confederate bid for independence was clearly a lost cause, the army of General Thomas was transferred from the city, and Governor Andrew Johnson, having been elected Vice President on the Union ticket with Lincoln, left for Washington to assume his new duties. A new governor, William G. "Parson" Brownlow was inaugurated. Union loyalists were in command of Tennessee and of the nation. Lee's surrender to Grant, Lincoln's assassination, and Johnson's elevation to the office of President were close at hand.

The war had claimed tens of thousands of ' lives. One part of the Union, having prevailed against its other half, made a show of celebrating victory, but it was a costly triumph. Wounds had been inflicted that would take a century and more to heal. Many war-torn cities were in ruins. Nashville was among the more fortunate, yet a sympathetic Union officer, John Fitch, described it as "stagnant, prostrate, and in the abject position of a subjugated city." In the chill gray April of 1865, the road to recovery was a narrow path of thorns, and all uphill.

THE EFFECTS of the Civil War upon the institutions and structures of Nashville, upon its homes and businesses and its geography, could be readily seen. The majestic trees were gone, and the hills were scarred with the abandoned remains of Fort Negley and the other military installations. The Nashville Female Academy was closed, never to open again. The University of Nashville had been converted to hospital and barracks use, but it remained and would resume its mission. Hundreds of homes had been commandeered, and some of them had been destroyed.

Still, Nashville was not devastated. It had not been set to the torch, as Atlanta and Richmond had. It had suffered damage, but not destruction. Its downtown area remained essentially intact; it needed renovation more than reconstruction. The physical scars to property could be tended to, and Nashville could be revitalized as a city.

But the personal scars, the physical and psychological wounds, were far more serious. Many of them would be permanent; many more had already been fatal. Only in the anguished faces of the survivors could the awful impact of the war be seen; only in the sundered lives of individual people and families could the full cost of the tragedy be counted. The war's casualties included more than just the dead and wounded.

One such casualty was William Driver, the salty old sea captain whose flag had flown briefly over the Union-held capitol. It was a flag his mother had made for him in 1824, when he was first licensed to command a ship. He had named it Old Glory, and flown it from the mast of his first vessel on a voyage to the South Pacific. Driver had moved from Massachusetts to Nashville in 1837, following two of his brothers here. He had joined Christ Episcopal Church, married, raised a large family, and worked as a salesman. He was a Yankee through and through, and he flew his flag proudly on every holiday and election day. He was called Captain Bill, or Old Glory Driver, and he was well-liked.

When the Civil War began, Driver sewed his beloved flag inside a quilt for safekeeping, but he did not shrink from expressing his deeply felt pro-Union sentiments. When the Ohio Volunteer Infantry occupied Nashville, he solemnly presented the old flag to be flown over the capitol, and thereafter he displayed it regularly in front of his home until his death in 1886.

William Driver lived to see the Union restored, but he did not die a happy man. Three of his sons had joined the Confederate Army, and one had died in battle.

And then there was Felix Robertson: He had been born at Freeland's Station in 1781, born with Nashville itself. in the midst of another war - the war with the native American claimants to the Cumberland country. He had spent his life as a physician, a healer. When the Civil War came to Nashville, he was an eighty-year-old widower; his children and grandchildren were grown and gone, some to wear the Union blue, others the Confederate gray. If Dr. Robertson favored one side over the other, he kept the sentiment to himself; the fact of their division was tragedy enough. Through the years of conflict, he lived virtually as a recluse, shuttered away in sadness. Three months after Appomattox, he died quietly at his home.

And Francis B. Fogg: A lawyer, a Northerner by birth and sympathy, a Southerner by marriage and by choice, he had helped to found Nashville's public school system. He and his wife, Mary Middleton Rutledge, saw their son Henry off to war in a Confederate uniform, and saw him return in a coffin. In the same early battle of the war that claimed the life of Henry Fogg, Nashville journalist Felix Zollicoffer and the son of horseman Balie Peyton also died. The senior Peyton, like Francis Fogg, opposed secession; so had Zollicoffer, until the war came and he went with a sad sense of duty to serve his state and the Confederacy.

Painful family divisions such as these occurred repeatedly. John Berrien Lindsley, who succeeded his father as president of the University of Nashville and founded the medical school there, remained in the city throughout the war and was loyal to the Union. His wife was a sister of Randal McGavock, a former mayor of Nashville and a Confederate officer who died in battle. Joshua F. Pearl, the superintendent of Nashville's public schools, left the city in 1861 because of his Union sympathies and became a captain in the Union army, but his son stayed behind to join the Confederacy. Pearl returned to serve briefly as superintendent after the war.

Tennessee put 167,000 men in Confederate gray and 31,000 in Union blue-more in each case than any other Southern state-and Nashville exemplified those divided loyalties. Relatively few Nashvillians served in the Union Army, but a good many, including Return J. Meigs, John Trimble, Samuel Watkins, and former Mayor John M. Lea, were steadfastly loyal to the Union cause. The Confederacy attracted an even larger number of the city's leaders, among them John C. Burch, William H. Jackson, John S. Bransford, V. K. Stevenson, Francis McNairy, and the Reverend John B. McFerrin. McNairy, a fourth-generation Nashvillian, lost his life.

Former Governor Neill S. Brown opposed secession, but he refused to sign the loyalty oath required by Governor Johnson; he was arrested for treason and then released, after which he expressed devotion to the cause of the United States.

Judge John Catron had been a Nashville lawyer and Tennessee's first chief justice before Andrew Jackson appointed him to the United States Supreme Court in 1837. Before the war began, he came home from Washington to plead with Tennessee officials to hold the state in the Union. After secession, he was advised to leave the state. Catron returned in 1865, only to die soon thereafter.

John Bell, the Nashville congressman, moved to the United States Senate in 1847, served there fourteen years, and ran for President in 1860 as an anti-secessionist conservative Southerner. Having given his all to the preservation of the Union, he finally and reluctantly endorsed the Confederacy. Bell left Nashville when the federal army came but stayed in the South, and he died in 1869, described by a friend as "a heartbroken old man."

Andrew Ewing, grandson of the first clerk of the Davidson County court, served in Congress before the war and opposed secession but finally joined the Confederate Army. Adolphus Heiman, the Prussian immigrant who became one of Nashville's outstanding architects, died fighting for the Confederacy. Mark Robertson Cockrill, an old man with strong Southern sympathies, had his livestock confiscated by Union soldiers and

retaliated by leading an abortive Rebel cavalry charge when he was seventy-five years old. William Giles Harding, the Belle Meade Plantation owner whose friends thought him peculiar because he bought and kept slaves but would not sell them, spent a few months in a Michigan prison for refusing to sign Governor Johnson's loyalty oath. Robert B. C. Howell, pastor of the First Baptist Church and an avid Rebel, went to prison along with several other ministers, and said proudly that it was "all we can do for our country."

The list went on endlessly. The venerable Mrs. James K. Polk graciously received Confederate and Union generals alike at her house, but she was a conspicuous exception; for the multitude, neutrality was not possible. Ordinary citizens, no less than the prominent, suffered division and death with the same certainty, and hordes of dispossessed blacks - landless, nameless, powerless - could know in their first taste of freedom only more suffering.

Finally, the war's casualty list included the two young men who had been raised by Rachel and Andrew Jackson. Their nephew, Andrew Jackson Donelson, had been nominated for Vice President on the American Party ticket with Millard Fillmore in 1856, and Abraham Lincoln had solicited his support in 1860. Donelson strenuously opposed the secessionist movement, saying it would be the ruin of the South, but his two sons joined the Confederate Army, and both died in the war. His brother and all of his other male kinsmen were also Rebels, yet Donelson remained steadfastly loyal to the Union. In Mississippi, he denounced Jefferson Davis publicly and called secession a cruel and unnecessary act. He was arrested there and later released. In 1871, he died in Memphis, an outcast and a despondent man who was, in the words of a friend, "overcome by the misfortunes of war."

Andrew Jackson Jr., the adopted son of the late President and his wife, stayed on at the Hermitage until 1855, when his inheritance was dissipated and he was near bankruptcy. He sold the house and 500 acres to the state and moved his family to Mississippi. Jackson maintained a steadfast loyalty to the federal government, but one of his sons, Samuel, joined the Confederacy and died of wounds received in battle, and another son, Andrew Jackson III, also a Confederate soldier, spent ten months in a federal prison camp in the North. In 1865, Andrew Jackson Jr. became one more victim in an age of violence; he died from the complications of a hunting-accident gunshot wound.

Whether by premeditated passion, by sudden outbursts of anger, by accident or inadvertence, death had become a commonplace occurrence and violence a way of life. Such were the consequences of a war among countrymen. Not for a century would the price of it be finally paid or the pain forgotten.

THE PEOPLE who put Nashville back on its feet were, like the ones who had prostrated it, a mixed lot: newcomers and old-timers, peacemakers and troublemakers, carpetbaggers and scalawags, transplanted Yankees and reconstructed Rebels and some who loathed the very notion of reconstruction. It took the better part of a decade for the direction and pace of the city's postwar movement to become fixed, and in that crucial period of transition, Nashvillians could find ample cause for both hope and despair.

With the statehouse tightly controlled by Republican Governor "Parson" Brownlow, the legislature amended the state constitution in 1865 to abolish slavery. (Ironically, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation did not apply to Tennessee; only the states in rebellion were affected by it, and Tennessee in 1863 was Union-occupied and thus technically restored to the national fold.) In 1866, when the legislature ratified the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments to the federal Constitution, Tennessee became the first Southern state to be formally readmitted to the Union. The voting rights of ex-Confederates were restored two years later, and Tennessee was exempted from the federal Reconstruction Acts that were to generate such controversy in the lower South.

On paper, the state had put an end to its rebellious past and returned to the good graces of the nation-but in fact, it remained torn and divided. Governor Brownlow, an East Tennessean like Governor Johnson before him, was not kindly disposed to Nashville. He and Johnson had long resisted the steady shift of political power from the eastern mountains to the middle and western districts of the state, and in the 1840s, when Nashville was chosen as the permanent capital. The two men had supported a separatist plan to reorganize a large number of mountain counties into a new state. Their failure only reinforced Brownlow's view that Nashville was in the grip of an aristocratic ruling elite, and when he became governor, he apparently was determined to impose on the city his own plan of reconstruction.

In 1867, Brownlow used his influence to get Augustus E. Alden, a former Union officer, elected mayor of Nashville. Alden was only thirty years old when he took office and was virtually unknown in the city, but the manner in which the governor had advanced him and the reform-minded policies he pursued quickly made him a controversial figure. Alden sought support from the newly enfranchised blacks - two blacks were elected to the city council during his tenure - and in the fields of education, welfare, and public health he began programs for the general improvement of the poor and underprivileged. He was re-elected in 1868, but the following year he was ousted from office when the city was found to be heavily in debt and its treasury almost depleted. Nashville's old guard viewed Alden as a wild radical and his administration - dubbed the Alden Ring - as a corrupt and destructive force. No charges of corruption were ever proved against the young mayor, but he was removed from office nonetheless, and within two years he had left the city.

Alden's impact on Nashville was brief but far-reaching; Brownlow's tenure was longer, but apparently it had less effect upon the city. It is difficult even now to assess either man's motives and intentions, so mixed and complex do they appear. The same can also be said of many of the leading Nashvillians who opposed the Brownlow-Alden regime. But there were two men who worked in very different ways to heal the wounds of war, and they had a significant and lasting influence in the city throughout its long period of recovery.

One of them was John McCormick Lea. As a mayor of Nashville before the war and later as a judge, Lea had earned a reputation as a reconciler, a diplomatic mediator of disputes. The war presented a supreme challenge to such a person, and he rose to the occasion: Lea helped to arrange Nashville's surrender to General Buell's army; he was largely responsible for the favorable treatment accorded most citizens and their property in the occupied city; he influenced Andrew Johnson to make the policies of military control less harsh and vindictive than they might otherwise have been. After the war, when Johnson had become President, Lea continued to advise him, and most of the policy decisions leading to Tennessee's early readmission to the Union were an indirect result of the judge's quietly persuasive counsel.

The other leading advocate in Nashville's behalf operated in a much different manner. John Berrien Lindsley, carrying on a family tradition that had begun with his father nearly fifty years earlier, was an outspoken pleader for local reform and improvement in several areas of pressing concern. He made an investigation of the state penitentiary and issued a report citing inhumane conditions and practices; the institution, he said, "requires a complete remodeling in order to become a fit abode for a human being." Lindsley was president of a local association of citizens chartered "for the purpose of visiting, taking care of, and providing for, the afflicted and destitute." He joined former Governor Neill Brown, John M. Bass, Arthur S. Colyar, Josephus C. Guild and others in denouncing the administration of Augustus Alden, and Lindsley went further than the others to charge that Alden was not helping blacks and the poor, as he claimed, but exploiting them, and frustrating their legitimate desire to "become property holders and co-rulers in fact."

Lindsley and his colleagues at the University of Nashville struggled with only limited success to keep the institution in operation, but they had better results with its medical department, which functioned without

interruption through the war and entered the 1870s staggered but still intact.

The presence of a strong corps of physicians and medical educators in Nashville made all the more ironic the fact that the city was a very unhealthy place after the Civil War and had been for decades. It was struck frequently by epidemics, the most persistent being cholera; it had severe and unattended problems of waste disposal, animal control, and water impurity. Between 1833 and 1873, Nashville had seven major epidemics of cholera that in combination claimed more than 2,500 lives; in 1866 alone, nearly a thousand people died of the disease, and in 1873 the death toll may have been even higher.

As the city's chief health officer, Dr. Lindsley called repeatedly for ordinances and voluntary efforts to bring about a general cleanup of the community, but his pleas were unheeded more often than not, and he and his fellow physicians were powerless to do anything more than treat the sufferers while the causes of the disease were not attacked.

Nashville had other serious and debilitating problems in those difficult postwar years. A general condition of unplanned and uncoordinated growth prevailed. The persistent efforts of Lindsley and others to work for the general welfare of the community were exceptional; more common was an attitude of narrow self-interest. Social and economic class divisions were unimproved, if not more pronounced. Some businessmen and industrialists, as well as many government officials, seemed inclined to take whatever advantage they could whenever they could, without regard for the consequences. The few blacks who gained a measure of wealth or influence were as susceptible to corruption as whites, and for the multitude of the poor and unskilled and illiterate of both races, conditions of health and life were in some ways worse than ever. To all this could be added the frightening presence of the Ku Klux Klan, a secret organization of ex-Confederate vigilantes who carried out night-riding acts of intimidation and terrorism for several years after the war. Local Klans from all over the region met in Nashville in 1867 to form a general organization, and Nathan Bedford Forrest, the ex-Confederate cavalry leader, was chosen as the "Grand Wizard" of the "Empire." The local unit of the Klan held regular late-night meetings in the abandoned ruins of Fort Negley.

In spite of its disturbing catalogue of unaddressed and unresolved ills, however, Nashville had some redeeming qualities, and it offered to most of its people a promise of better times to come.

It had, as a base, the citizens who shared with Lindsley a concern for the general welfare and a willingness to work for community improvement. It also had many young men who had come home from the war to take up the challenge of personal and institutional recovery. They included not-only native Nashvillians, most of whom had fought for the South, but a good many former Union officers who stayed in the city, married local women, and rose to positions of prominence.

The achievements of a few Nashvillians, both native-born and transplanted, would make their names familiar far beyond the city's borders. George Dury, a Bavarian-born artist, lived in the city from 1850 to 1895 and painted portraits of such noted figures as Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson, and Robert E. Lee. Henry Waterson, son of a Tennessee congressman, lived in Nashville off and on before the war and came in 1865 for a two-year stay as an editor of the Republican Banner before going on to fame as the editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal. Edward Emerson Barnard, born in poverty in Nashville, was a self-taught astronomer who became renowned as a discoverer and photographer of comets and planetary satellites. James Braid, a Scottish immigrant and an experimenter in the virgin field of electricity, met Alexander Graham Bell at a scientific convention here in 1877, and the following year used Bell's patented discovery to make a long-distance telephone call from Nashville to Louisville. It may have been the nation's first.

Another resident of some note arrived in the frigid winter of 1864, a seventeen-year-old youth shivering in a linen suit and carrying with him nearly all his worldly possessions. He worked briefly as a telegraph operator

and then moved on. When he returned on a cobalt prospecting trip to Hickman County in 1906, his name was a household word throughout the nation, but it was only by chance that a reporter for the Nashville Banner found him registered at the Duncan Hotel on Church Street. The visitor and former resident was the famed American inventor, Thomas Edison.

From the beginning of the postwar period, Nashville's gradual recovery was marked by some encouraging developments. In 1866, the suspension bridge was rebuilt, mail delivery was improved and expanded, and horse-drawn streetcars were introduced. In the center of the city, a splendid new hotel, the Maxwell House, was opened in 1869. It had been started a decade earlier by a son of John Overton and occupied in an unfinished state by soldiers and prisoners during the war; now it was completed with much fanfare as a glittering symbol of the city's determination to rise again. It was to become a nationally known landmark, and it would remain for almost a century as Nashville's premier hotel.

The suburban districts of the city - North Nashville, Edgefield, and the university community in South Nashville-were thriving with new growth and vitality. The churches were also active: The convent and academy of St. Cecilia and the Church of the Assumption, having been built by Catholics in North Nashville just-before the war, were among the institutions in that part of the city which helped to give many people-especially German and Irish immigrants-a sense of identity and belonging. Nashville's small Jewish community, having within it the roots of Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform traditions, built its first synagogue, the Byzantine-styled Vine Street Temple, in 1876, and it became the Reform congregation as first Conservative and then Orthodox factions split from it and built additional synagogues.

For the Protestant churches of the city, recovery was less rapid. The various denominations had once been united internally across regional and even racial lines, but no longer; all connections with their Northern counterparts had been severed before the war, and black Baptists and Methodists had begun their own churches. With few exceptions, those divisions would be permanent.

The railroads expanded rapidly after the war, systematically hastening the day of the steamboat's eventual demise. Vernon K. Stevenson, the man who had brought the railroad to Nashville in 1850, moved to New York after fighting for the Confederacy, but he still owned controlling interest in the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis line. He and Edmund W. "King" Cole of Nashville were generally regarded as the leading railroad men of the middle South until 1880, when Stevenson sold most of his holdings to the Louisville and Nashville Railroad and control of the line shifted to Kentucky and later to New York.

When Nashville paused in 1880 to celebrate its first 100 years of existence, it seemed suspended between trauma and recovery. It was a study in contrasts, a portrait in - light and shadow; for every sign of vitality it showed, it had a corresponding symptom of weakness. It had 43,000 people - almost three times the 1860 total - and for the first time, more people lived in Nashville than in the rest of Davidson County. It was urban in a literal sense, the fourth largest city in the South, an agricultural town no longer - yet pigs could still be found rooting in its streets. It had severe social and economic divisions, lingering political animosities, and the highest death rate of any American city - but it also had some conspicuous signs of wealth, a budding spirit of boosterism, and enough ferment and energy to make almost anything possible.

For more than a month in the spring of 1880, Nashville reveled in an orgy of celebration. It was a century old and in no mood to dwell upon its problems. There was a sprawling new exposition center at the corner of Broad and Spruce streets (now Broadway and Eighth Avenue). In a continuous flow of events and activities climaxed by the unveiling of an equestrian statue of Andrew Jackson on Capitol Hill - the observance of the city's centennial was carried on in an atmosphere of pride and optimism. Nashville saw itself as having come of age. It bore only the faintest resemblance to the frontier town it had been in Jackson's day - and none at all to its rude

beginning as a palisaded station on the bluff. The days of its birth and youth were not only long past but almost forgotten; with the rest of the nation, Nashville was happily and eagerly entering the modern era.

THE SUREST and most permanent indication of Nashville's emergence as a modern American city could be seen in its development of colleges and universities. Between the close of the Civil War and the celebration of the city's centennial, no fewer than a dozen institutions were restored to service or opened for the first time. The tradition of interest in education that had begun with the founding of Davidson Academy in 1785 reached full maturity in the postwar era.

Davidson Academy had evolved into Cumberland College and then into the University of Nashville in the early 1800s, and its medical and literary departments were still functioning after the war, but they were in precarious condition. With the support of the state government and the Peabody Education Fund, a national endowment, the literary department became a separate institution known as Tennessee State Normal College in 1875 and continued operation in the University of Nashville campus facilities on Market Street (now Second Avenue South).

With the Freedman's Bureau, the Peabody Fund, and the missionary divisions of several Northern Protestant churches leading the way, education for blacks became an important development after the war, and Nashville benefited from that movement when three new institutions were created here.

One of them was Nashville Normal and Theological Institute, an American Baptist school. After twelve years of struggle, the school purchased a mansion and thirty acres of land on the Hillsboro Turnpike (later to be the campus of George Peabody College for Teachers) and moved there in 1876. Under a new name - Roger Williams University – it remained in that location until 1905, when a fire destroyed the main building.

Central Tennessee College, another of the institutions for blacks, began operation on Chestnut Street in South Nashville in 1865 and soon moved to facilities on College Street. Under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the school developed programs in teacher training, manual and industrial arts, law, and medicine-the latter being Meharry Medical Department, the first such educational program ever established for blacks in the United States. Central Tennessee College changed its name to Walden University in 1900. Fifteen years later, Walden closed, but Meharry Medical College survives and has operated continuously for more than a century.

The third new institution was Fisk University, opened in 1866 and named for Clinton B. Fisk, head of the Freedman's Bureau in the Tennessee-Kentucky area and a former general in the Union Army. (Clinton Fisk was white, as were all of the administrators and most of the faculty of the schools for blacks.) The American Missionary Association, a division of the Congregational Church, supported the institution, and E. M. Cravath, who had been a Union Army chaplain, was named its first president in 1875, after the school had struggled for nearly a decade to establish itself. That struggle was dramatized by the artistry of a group of students, the Fisk Jubilee Singers, whose voices ultimately saved the college from collapse.

The young men and women, most of them ex-slaves, formed a musical unit under the direction of George L. White, the school's treasurer and instructor of vocal music, ignoring the advice of Clinton Fisk ("I trusted in God and not in General Fisk"), White scraped together funds from the school treasury and his own resources and took the troupe on tour in 1871. After a slow start, they built a moving and melancholy repertoire of spirituals and slave songs that drew cheers and tears-and best of all, money-from audiences in the North and East. They sang "Go Down, Moses" for President Ulysses S. Grant at the White House and the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" for an audience of 40,000 in Boston, and they returned after eight months with \$20,000 for the Fisk treasury.

The Jubilee Singers went on to receive international acclaim. They made two tours of Europe, winning

the praise of royalty and the common people alike, and their performance raised more than \$100,000 for the university. The funds were used for the purchase of Fisk's present campus in North Nashville and for the construction of Jubilee Hall, a Victorian Gothic edifice that has since been designated as a national historical landmark.

John Berrien Lindsley, who had guided the fortunes of the University of Nashville through war and hard times, noted in a speech in 1875 that "those who are controlling the education of the colored people are wide awake to the advantages of these schools, while those who control the education of the white people do not seem to have turned their earnest attention to the subject." He added: "I want to see the black man educated, but I do not want to see the white man neglected. "

Two years before that speech, Southern Methodists had obtained a charter to establish the Central University of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, but they lacked the funds to start it. The bishop of the church, Holland N. McTyeire, had an opportunity to describe the proposed institution to railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt (the two men having married cousins), and the crusty old Commodore, who was known to be ruthless and domineering in his business dealings, made a million-dollar gift to the school on the condition that Bishop McTyeire be named president of its board of trustees for life. The trustees readily agreed; in gratitude, they changed the name of the institution to Vanderbilt University, purchased seventy-five acres for a campus in the west end of Nashville, and enrolled the first students in the fall of 1875. Landon C. Garland was chosen to be the first chancellor, and by 1880, almost 500 students were enrolled.

Medical education was revitalized in the postwar period, so much so that by the late 1870s, Nashville had five medical schools - in name, if not in fact. In addition to the medical departments of the University of Nashville, Vanderbilt University, and Central Tennessee College (Meharry), there were also Shelby Medical College and Nashville Medical College. In time, Shelby and Vanderbilt would merge, sharing facilities with the University of Nashville, and the latter institution would be joined with Nashville Medical College and moved to Memphis as the medical school of the University of Tennessee. Vanderbilt and Meharry would remain to carry on the tradition of medical education in Nashville. The city's nineteenth-century effort in higher education did not end there. Ward's Seminary, the successor to Nashville Female Academy, gained notice as a thriving institution after the war. Another school for young women, Belmont Junior College, was founded in 1890, and later it would merge with Ward's to form Ward-Belmont and continue for almost forty years as a finishing school for girls. Samuel Watkins, an orphan who became first a bricklayer and then a major contractor in the city, would be remembered for founding Watkins Institute, a tuition-free vocational school for adults, and J. F. B. Draughon would likewise be recalled for starting a business school bearing his name. Another new institution, Nashville Bible School, owed its existence mainly to a Church of Christ minister named David Lipscomb, and the college would be named for him after his death when his farm south of the city became its campus.

Nashville's public schools, including separate schools for blacks, went through a period of growth and improvement after the war, and a large number of private academies also continued to operate. Education was a substantial enterprise in Nashville. It had prompted Philip Lindsley's biographer in 1859 to refer to the city as the Athens of the West and a Union Army quartermaster in 1864 to call it the Athens of the South; in 1897, Tennessee's governor would repeat the phrase, and it would stick. Nashville would always point with pride to its colleges and universities, and go on calling itself the Athens of the South.

BEFORE it built a Parthenon to symbolize its Athenian aspirations, Nashville would pass the final two decades of the nineteenth century without giving much thought to planning or coordination or regulation. The problems caused by rapid growth were all but ignored. Some fascinating inventions and diversions had come on the scene - the telegraph, the telephone, electricity, machines of all sorts, cameras and phonograph records and dozens

more - and they attracted wide public interest. Neither the city's centennial in 1880 nor the state's in 1897 would hold people's minds for long on the past, or on the future; what mattered most was the present.

The growth continued. Edgefield was annexed, bringing 6,500 people from that suburban district into the population of the city. It and other nearby residential neighborhoods north and south of the central business district - as well as the more distant Davidson County villages such as Goodlettsville, Madison, Donelson, Antioch, and Bellevue stood in sharp contrast to the city itself, as did another large suburban section that was beginning to develop around Vanderbilt University on the west. Nashville still had a mixture of homes and businesses within close range of the Public Square, but its waterfront and its railroad depots gave the downtown district an air of turbulence and transience. Taverns and brothels dotted the area, crime was pervasive, and a squalid cluster of overcrowded shacks housing mostly black and Irish laborers had grown up in a ring that began along the waterfront and ran around the base of Capitol Hill, through the long gulch west of town, and back to the river south of Broad Street.

The inclination of the more affluent segment of the population was to deplore the poverty and crime and vice in the downtown district - and whenever possible, to escape it. Nashville's economic base was concentrated in the heart of the city - industry and banking, retail and wholesale trade, transportation and professional services were all there - but many of the people who provided those goods and services were beginning to move to the suburbs, and the problems they left behind in Black Bottom and Hell's Half Acre and the rest of the urban center grew worse.

The most conspicuous contrast to the shacks that ringed the downtown area was provided by the country mansions that had risen in all directions a few miles from the city. Belle Meade and Riverview and the Hermitage were among them, but the most spectacular of all was Belmont - and its mistress Adelicia Hayes Franklin Acklen Cheatham, was the second woman in Davidson County ever to gain prominence on her own, rather than as the wife of a powerful man. (The first was Lucinda "Granny" White, a legendary tavern-keeper in the early 1800s.)

Adelicia was a Nashvillian by birth, a daughter of local attorney Oliver Bliss Hayes, and from early age she was noted for her intelligence as well as her beauty. She attended the Nashville Female Academy and at seventeen was engaged to marry a banker's son, but he died of typhoid fever. Then she met Isaac Franklin, an enormously wealthy planter and fifty-year-old bachelor; she married him in 1839 and bore him four children. By 1846, three of the children and Franklin himself had died of various illnesses, and Adelicia was a widow before she was much past thirty years of age.

She was also the principal heir to what may have been the largest 'fortune in the South, and three years after her first husband's death she married another bachelor, Joseph A. S. Acklen. Together, in the early 1850s, they built Belmont, a hilltop mansion of Italian and Greek design and gargantuan proportions. It stands now at the crest of Sixteenth Avenue South, on a hill that was then the center of a 170-acre estate two miles from the city, surrounded by park-like woods and formal gardens.

Six children were born to the Acklens, but by 1855, the only surviving Franklin child had died of diphtheria and two of the Acklen daughters were dead of scarlet fever. The war was coming, too, and in the midst of it, Joseph Acklen would succumb to pneumonia. In a little more than thirty years, Adelicia Acklen had lost a fiance, two husbands, and six children - grim proof that the diseases of the age were no respecter of class. But in time to come, the mistress of Belmont would be remembered less for the tragedy in her life than for her role as the leading social hostess in a region that treasured such designations. She would also be remembered for her shrewd and independent management of the enormous fortune she had inherited.

From 1850 until well into the 1870s - with hardly a pause for the Civil War - she made Belmont the social

center of Nashville, the state of Tennessee, and much of the South. She married again after the war, to William Archer Cheatham of Nashville, then separated from him after eighteen years, and died at the age of seventy-four in 1887. Even when she was past her prime, her hospitality was said to be as matchless as her wealth. In a society that provided few opportunities for women to distinguish themselves, she had made sure her name would not be soon forgotten.

Adelicia Acklen may have been a little too independent for the prim and proper Victorian culture that dominated Nashville social life in the waning years of the century. Among the affluent, those were years of teas and lectures and recitals for the women, a little discreet whiskey and gambling for the men (the Southern Turf on Cherry Street being the favorite saloon), parties and debutante balls for the young, and revivals for everyone. Horse racing seemed to be losing favor (even the livery business was suffering from the arrival of bicycles), but baseball was a big attraction in the sulphur spring bottom where James Robertson had once planted corn, and riders on the new electric streetcars flocked to Glendale, an amusement park south of the city.

It was told around town that the James boys, Jesse and Frank, had operated their outlaw gang of bank and train robbers from farms in the Bordeaux-Joelton section of northwest Davidson County for a number of years after the Civil War, but nobody wanted to believe that. It was also known around town that a secret political organization called the American Protective Association was stirring up ill-will against Catholics and foreigners, but nobody liked to talk about that.

It was more inspiring to talk about Tom Ryman, the last of the Cumberland River steamboat barons. He had risen from humble beginnings in Nashville to control thirty-five riverboats, and he was in his free-wheeling prime in 1885 when he dropped in on a tent meeting being conducted by evangelist Sam P. Jones.

The experience transformed Ryman. He was converted to the Christian gospel, and he opened a temperance hall on Broad Street that year. In 1889 he started building the Union Gospel Tabernacle, a cavernous hall where Jones and other evangelists of all faiths could hold revivals. Ryman shouldered more than \$85,000 in debt for the building and carried it without complaint into the next century. The riverboat captain died in 1904, and when Sam Jones preached his funeral to a packed hall on Christmas Day, he suggested that the name of the building be changed to the Ryman Auditorium.

Over time, the religious purposes to which the auditorium had been devoted were enlarged to take in a variety of speakers and performers, from Theodore Roosevelt and Booker T. Washington to Enrico Caruso and Sarah Bernhardt and - in the 1940s - the cast of the Grand Ole Opry.

In the Victorian age of guarded morality and extravagant piety, Nashville seemed to see itself as a changed community, but it remained in many ways the same city it had always been. It was intensely patriotic, sending more than its share of volunteers to the Spanish-American War in 1898, as it had to all previous wars. It had a diverse economy that was resilient enough to weather the Panic of 1893. Its air and water were still polluted, its streets still dirty, its health still poor. It looked upon inequalities of race, class, and sex matter-of-factly, if they were providential. Its journalistic and political rivalries were monumental and unceasing. It accepted "New South" segregation with the same casual ease it had once shown for Old South slavery. And it was still a church town, with a majority of its citizens in active membership. (More of them were Methodists than anything else, but surprisingly there were more Catholics than Presbyterians and Baptists combined and more Jews than Episcopalians.)

Nashville was a city of extremes. Its virtues and vices were displayed extravagantly, in grand manner and heroic proportion. Sporting events and saloon celebrations no less than revivals and temperance meetings attracted large and emotional crowds. With the slightest provocation, Nashvillians could be heard praising and condemning with equal fervor the perceived saints and sinners of the day.

There could have been no better place, then, for a celebratory extravaganza such as the Tennessee Centennial of 1897, an exposition to commemorate - one year late - the 100th anniversary of Tennessee's admission to the Union. It lasted six months, cost more than a million dollars, attracted 1,786,000 people, and turned a modest profit - a result virtually unheard-of for such events.

The exposition grounds were in Nashville's West Side Park, later to be renamed Centennial Park. Exhibit halls, midway attractions, lakes and fountains and glittering lights drew visitors day and night; there was even an exotic troupe of camels and turbaned merchants and belly dancers from the Middle East. President William McKinley led a train of prominent visitors to the fair, but the primary attraction was a building, not a person. It was the centerpiece of the show, painstakingly constructed of wood, plaster, and stucco: a full-size replica of the ruined pride of Greece, the Parthenon.

Nashville liked the Parthenon, liked the symbolism of it, liked the park in which it stood. When the fair was over, all the other buildings were either moved or torn down and sold for scrap, but the Parthenon was left standing. Within ten years, it had begun to deteriorate; within twenty, it was near to being like the original-a ruin. In 1922, the city would decide to replace the replica with a permanent structure built of reinforced concrete, and a local engineering firm, Foster and Creighton, would win the principal job of reconstruction. Nine years later, Nashville would have a permanent and lasting symbol for its self-styled image as the Athens of the South.

The inspiration for that symbol and for much of the entire exposition came from Eugene C. Lewis, a consulting engineer with close ties to the railroad industry, to the local press, and to the political and economic powers of the city and state. The Tennessee Historical Society originated the idea for the centennial celebration, but in reality, it was a promotional exposition planned and executed mainly by railroad men - and particularly by officials of the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis line, then a subsidiary of the Louisville and Nashville. Lewis and John W. Thomas, the president of the centennial, were the top officials of the NC&StL.

Before the fair, the railroads were in dire need of public favor and support; in thirty years of postwar operations, their well-documented abuses of power had created a reservoir of cynicism and distrust. The centennial smothered much of that ill will under a blanket of euphoric celebration, and the railroads, encouraged by the result, moved forward with plans for a magnificent new downtown terminal building as a further show of their benevolence and public concern.

But it would take more than Union Station to secure the reign of the railroads. To be sure, they had numbered the days of the steamboats, but horseless carriages were coming (one was demonstrated at the exposition). and there was even talk of flying machines. And in any event, the railroads were too deeply involved in industrial rivalries, journalistic clashes, political power struggles, and competitive strife within their own ranks to find safe harbor in turn-of-the-century Tennessee.

Before the twentieth century had even begun, Nashville would witness the first salvo in a war between power blocs and pressure groups. The participants and the issues would change occasionally, but the struggle would keep its own momentum, and it would go on for decades. When it began on an October day in 1900, the setting and the subject for the initial confrontation were one and the same: Union Station.